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STALIN'S DEATH

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USC

TRANSFER OF POWER

1. Summary of Special Estimate.

Formal transfer of authority effected smoothly suggesting careful preparation and awareness of danger inherent in situation. Power transferred to Presidium of Council of Ministers - Malenkov, Beria, Molotov, Bulganin, Kaganovich - Closely paralleled war-time Committee of State-Defense under Stalin.

2. Query: Will this be one-man or committee government? Malenkov has key position but query, has he qualifications of individual leadership.

3. If Committee government, as likely, struggle for power may develop any time. Pulling +

hauling

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CONSEQUENCES OF STALIN'S DEATH

1. Economic and military basis of power unchanged but new leadership may prove less successful in maintaining and strengthening these bases.
2. USSR politically more vulnerable. New leadership will have difficult policy decisions, these difficulties increased by possible personal rivalries. Change in policy unlikely. Probably Soviet more rigid as compromise might be deemed evidence of weakness.  
  
New Regime less sure of itself and while unlikely risk new adventures it may not have Stalin's skill in handling issues that might lead toward war. New regime probably fears that West might take advantage of its growing pains for new aggressive moves and hence will view with unusual suspicion any moves they may make.

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EFFECT UPON PEOPLE OF USSR

Stalin's death removes demigod and great hero. Psychological shock - effect upon international Communist movement and outside Communist parties. Rank and file may well be effected but hard core probably unchanged.

SATELLITES:

Kremlin control probably unimpaired unless internal struggle.

YUGOSLAVIA:

Tito's anti-Communism not personal but against Kremlin regime. No change his attitude.

CHINA:

No immediate effect upon Kremlin-Chinese relations. Moscow will deal cautiously with Mao recognizing new Soviet leader lacks international prestige or the stature of Mao as leader and theoretician of Asian Communism.

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SUMMARY

Unlikely any immediate change. Hard, cautious, unyielding attitude within Russia; tightening control in Satellites to avoid incidents; over-all less strong until new leadership has proved itself.

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